Peer to Peer Support: How Academic Wellbeing is supported at UWE Bristol
Aims

• Explore wellbeing in HE
• Define what is PAL?
• Explore the changing remit of the library
• Review it’s success
• Facilitation rather than teaching, why?
Wellbeing, a crisis in our midst?

Number of students disclosing a mental health condition has tripled since 2007/08 (Equality Challenge Unit, 2015)

Students report significantly lower levels of mental wellbeing than the general population - more so with respect to minority groups (Ferguson, 2017)

HE sector is experiencing a ‘mental health crisis’ (The Guardian, August 2018)
Academic Pressure is cited as the primary cause of stress for students

YouGov, 2016
Mental Wealth First

Our commitment to putting mental health and wellbeing first

#MentalWealthFirst
Leadership and Communication of a whole university approach

Data to inform decisions and measure impact

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Prevention through health promotion

Partnerships internal and external

Support that is effective and evidenced
PAL Leader, Niamh Fahy, ACE: I have seen students become more confident and independent knowing they can speak directly to another student. I feel speaking about how you have developed your own work encourages students to experiment and explore the possibilities.
SI/PASS/PALS?

- ‘Supplemental Instruction (SI)
- Developed by Dr. Deanna Martin in 1973 at the University of Missouri, Kansas City (UMKC)
- Created to decrease the attrition rates of minority students in health care professions.

After SI was established there was a huge international interest on how to integrate PAL into educational contexts. In 2002, to support the demand for training the ‘International Center for Supplemental Instruction’ was formed – the centre recognises and trains ‘Certified Trainers’ who support the growth and training of SI-PASS supervisors.

The European Centre for Supplemental Instruction (SI) and Peer Assisted Study Session (PASS) is located in Lund University, Sweden.

In the UK and at UWE Bristol the model is sometimes called PASS and sometimes PAL (Peer Assisted Learning)
Main goals

Improve learning

Increase continued enrolment/retention

Improve student performance

‘SI-PASS programmes are connected to courses and complements regular education. The SI-PASS sessions do not replace regular education. Instead, they focus on processing already presented material through student collaboration in a challenging course.’
Enhancing learning: the integration into the library

Vision for Library Services

“To be the sector leading library; delivering outstanding library resources and services that enables students and staff to succeed in their learning, teaching, research and professional goals.”

Vision for PAL

“To provide opportunities for all students to access library resources and services that enables students to enhance their learning.”
At UWE Bristol

• PAL has been running at UWE since 2002

• Part of the UWE Library Services since 2016

• Centrally coordinated

• PAL Leaders are paid casual workers

• Voluntary for participants

• Programmes have to request PAL
Collaborative study support sessions

Emphasis on facilitation rather than teaching

Helps students to become independent learners

Normally appears on timetables

PAL Mentor matched up with a student

Transitional and pastoral support

Supporting all students with their emotional Resilience through bookable workshops
Focussed on Foundation, Level 1 and Direct Entry students

Facilitated by ‘near peers’ who use mentoring and role modelling techniques

Benefits all students regardless of current academic competency

Focuses on what and how you learn

Encourages collaborative and active learning

Privacy to practise the subject, making mistakes and building confidence.
Principles in practice?

85% of students agreed that they benefitted from attending PAL

Chloe Waul (PAL Leader) said... “The highlight so far has been challenging myself to try something new by becoming a PAL leader, I want to have a very diverse university experience and take advantage of as many opportunities as possible. I have also enjoyed helping others to focus their studies and putting the students at ease during the first months of semester one. Starting university can be a daunting experience and I am glad that I could help make the transition a little easier for some students.”

“A positive of PAL has been increasing my confidence in talking to whole groups which has been extremely useful for presentations on my course.”

- PAL Leader for N&M
Discipline ownership – programmes “own” PAL

Real World

PAL Leaders receive ILM qualification

High Quality

Tap into the expertise of Library staff to quality assure

Learner-centered

Focus of PAL is on the learner, it’s a student-ran and student-led programme

How does PAL fit with Library service’s aims?
The role of the librarian

- Training PAL Leaders
- Helping to promote self-efficacy and confidence for students
- Marking ILM Unit 1 work
- Quality assurance by observing PAL sessions
- Furthering experience for HEA fellowship status
- Developing relationship with students
In the Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences

- Implemented a targeted PAL scheme into the ‘Physiology and Pharmacology’ module that students reported to be struggling with.

- Paramedic Science PAL leaders linked in with the Paramedic Student society to provide bespoke sessions.

- Our Midwifery scheme supports practice-based learning by using the Library’s collection of anatomical models to run practical sessions in preparation for clinical exams.
Facilitate don’t teach

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<th>Preferred activities</th>
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<td><strong>Activists</strong></td>
<td>Mind-showering; problem solving; group discussion; puzzles; competitions and role-play.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theorist</strong></td>
<td>Models; statistics; stories; quotes; background information and applying theories.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pragmatist</strong></td>
<td>Time to think about how to apply learning in reality; case studies; problem solving and discussion.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reflector</strong></td>
<td>Paired discussions; self analysis questionnaires; personality questionnaires; time out; observing activities; feedback from others; coaching and interviews.</td>
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In summary

Peer-led

Principles

Self-efficacy